

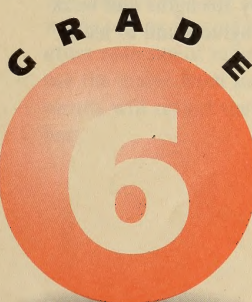
MAR 28 1996

Parent Guide

To Provincial Achievement Testing



Achievement tests?
We students will help you find out all about them!
Just follow us...



Alberta
EDUCATION

INSIDE

- Answers to key parent questions.
- What your child should know by the end of Grade 6.
- Sample questions, so that you can see, first-hand, what provincial achievement tests are all about.

Information About the Provincial Achievement Testing Program

What are the achievement tests and who writes them?

The achievement tests are provincial tests in language arts, social studies, science and mathematics. The tests are based on provincial standards for what students are expected to know in each of these subject areas.

All Alberta students in grades 3, 6 and 9 are expected to write the provincial tests for their grade levels. A small number of students in special circumstances, who would be unable to respond at all to the test or who would be harmed by the testing may be excused by a superintendent. Special provisions will be made for students with physical and learning disabilities who need assistance to write the tests.

What is the purpose of the achievement tests?

Alberta Education uses the tests to gather information about the level of achievement of students throughout Alberta. We report how well students are meeting provincial standards. School boards, superintendents, principals and teachers use test results to help them identify strengths and weaknesses in local programs and to make improvements.

How are tests developed?

Alberta Education and classroom teachers, in cooperation with school districts, work together to develop the provincial achievement tests. All questions are field tested with grades 3, 6 or 9 students before being used on provincial tests. Questions have to be clear to students, or we don't include the questions.

What changes will be introduced in 1995?

All tests will be given annually at the end of the school year. Grade 3 students will write tests in mathematics and language arts. Grades 6 and 9 students will write tests in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. In the past, students wrote a test in one subject each year. Subjects were rotated on a four-year basis.

Another important change is that teachers may mark the tests locally and use the results as part of students' final grades. Teachers may use the provincial tests in place of similar classroom, school or district year-end tests. This will reduce duplication of effort and costs.



LET'S SHOW THEM
HOW WE'RE DOING!



ALL OF US
WRITE TESTS.

In June, your son or daughter in Grade 6 will write provincial achievement tests in math, science, social studies and language arts. Students in grades 3 and 9 will also write achievement tests.

This year, the testing program has expanded to provide better information about how well students are meeting provincial standards. Tests will be given annually.

The changes being introduced in 1995 are described below in the answers to parents' questions.

How long will these tests take to write?

The Grade 3 language arts test has two parts: reading and writing. Each takes one hour. The multiple-choice test for mathematics will also take about one hour. At grades 6 and 9, the written section of the language arts test will take about two hours, and the reading section one and one-half hours. Multiple-choice tests in each of the other three subject areas will also take about one and one-half hours.

Suitable breaks will be provided for students. For example, the Grade 3 mathematics test is divided into two parts with a break in the middle. Also, tests can be written over several days so that only one test would be written in a day.

When will the tests be written?

Students will do the written part of the language arts tests in late May or early June and the rest of the tests in the last half of June.

Do the provincial achievement tests test everything?

No. Paper-and-pencil tests cannot easily measure such things as laboratory skills, creative thinking or oral language expression. Some student strengths can be

evaluated only by the classroom teacher. A single test cannot reveal as much about a student's development and growth as can evaluation by the classroom teacher over the course of a school year.

How are the tests marked?

Local marking is done by classroom teachers who are provided with scoring guides.

Provincial marking is done by selected classroom teachers who meet to mark the written part of the language arts test. Alberta Education staff provide training to the teachers and carry out regular reliability checks during marking. Multiple-choice questions are machine-scored.

Will these tests affect my child's final grades?

The teacher is in charge of classroom assessment. Each individual teacher will decide whether to mark the test and use the results in arriving at a final grade for your child.

The teacher may use the marks for the whole test or part of the test along with other assessment information. If teachers use the marks from the entire test, the results will reflect the provincial standard best.



**WE HAVE BREAKS
TO HELP US DO
OUR BEST.**



**OUR TEACHER
LOOKS AT LOTS OF OUR
OTHER WORK TOO.**

...continued on page 8

Provincial Standards and Sample Questions

The following information briefly lists some of the knowledge and skills that students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of Grade 6. You can get a more complete description through discussion of your child's educational program with his/her teacher.

Below are some sample questions. The questions give you a first hand look at what achievement tests are all about. The answers to the questions are on page 7.

Grade 6 Mathematics Standards

Students are expected to be able to:

- use decimal numbers from thousandths to billions and fractions (halves, thirds, quarters and fifths) and show numbers in a variety of ways
- add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals using estimations, calculators and computers when appropriate
- estimate, measure and/or calculate and compare quantities of length, capacity, mass, volume, angles and time
- compare and classify three-dimensional objects and two-dimensional shapes
- slide, flip and turn shapes
- collect, display and interpret data from a variety of sources and compare experimental results to what was predicted
- to define and solve a problem by selecting an appropriate strategy

Grade 6 Mathematics Sample Questions

The Marston Junior Community Band is going on a trip to compete in the Downsview Music Festival. The band will enjoy various activities in Downsview after the competition. They held fund-raising projects to earn money to pay for the trip.

Use the following information to answer question 1.

Before planning their fund-raising activities, the band drew up this budget.

Budget	
Expense	Cost
Bus	\$3698.76
Food	\$5126.00
Motel	\$2453.00
Festival Fee	\$150.49
Emergency Money	\$200.00

1. How much more money will the group need for food than for the combined expenses of motel and emergency money?

A. \$2653.00 B. \$2473.00
C. \$1873.00 D. \$1428.00

2. When Bud finished counting the money raised for the trip, he wrote the total amount like this:

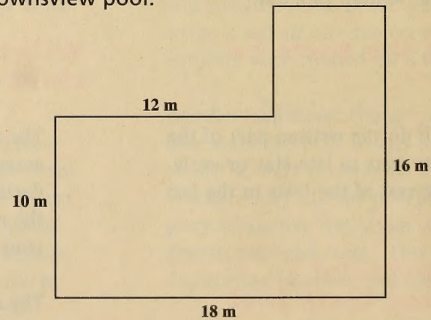
$$(1 \times 100) + (9 \times 1000) + (2 \times 10) + (8 \times 0.1) + (5 \times 1)$$

How much money did he count?

A. \$1902.85 B. \$1982.50
C. \$9128.05 D. \$9125.80

Use the following diagram to answer question 3.

The festival was held at the recreation centre next to the Downsview pool.



3. The band members wanted to know if the Downsview pool was as big as Marston's. What is the perimeter of the Downsview pool?

A. 62 m
B. 68 m
C. 180 m
D. 280 m

4. Each band played for 8 minutes during the festival.
What was the playing time for 18 bands?

- A. 1 h 40 min
- B. 2 h 24 min
- C. 2 h 40 min
- D. 14 h 40 min

Grade 6 Language Arts Standards

Through their involvement in reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing activities, students by the end of grade 6 are expected to be able to:

- read and understand Grade 6 level text
- describe and communicate the actions and motives of characters and the events in Grade 6 level literature
- identify a writer's or speaker's purpose and discuss whether it was achieved
- use appropriate words, sentence structure and correct punctuation and spelling in their own writing
- communicate information and ideas effectively for a specific audience and provide support for ideas and opinions
- gather and organize information from several sources to prepare reports and answer questions

Grade 6 Language Arts Sample Questions

Part A: Writing

Students are provided with a picture and a brief explanation as a prompt for their writing. Students choose the format (story, letter or diary/journal entries) that will allow them to do their best writing. Students have 2 hours to complete their writing.

Students' writing is evaluated on what they say and how well they say it. The scoring categories are content, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary and conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation). Content and organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the other categories in arriving at an overall score for students' writing.

Part B: Reading

Read the report below and answer questions 1 to 5.

On New Year's Day 1929 a telegraph message reached Edmonton from Fort Vermilion. Diphtheria had broken out! If toxin to fight the disease was not flown in at once, many Indians and Metis would die.

The five hundred kilometres between Edmonton and Fort Vermilion was trackless wilderness. The ground temperature was close to 40 below. To attempt such a flight in the middle of winter in an open plane was very dangerous. When they were asked to go, however, Wop May and Vic Horner said "Yes" and headed for their plane.

The men could hardly see in the swirling snow and the bone-chilling cold. They flew very low, just skimming the treetops. When they finally got as far as McLennan, they were forced to land.

To get back into the air they had to heat their engine oil in a stove and thaw out their engine with a blowtorch. But they made the journey safely.

When they arrived at Peace River Crossing on their return journey, they were very cold. Wop May's hands were so cold they had to be pried from the wheel. Both men had to be lifted from the plane. When they got back to Edmonton, 10,000 cheering people gave them a hero's welcome.

- 10
- 15
- 20
- 25
1. During which month did this flight occur?
 - A. December
 - B. January
 - C. February
 - D. March
 2. Which of the following words would **best** replace "attempt" (line 9)?
 - A. Try
 - B. Risk
 - C. Manage
 - D. Take
 3. Why did these two men make this flight?
 - A. They wanted to take part in a dangerous mission.
 - B. They wanted to give the plane its first cold-weather test.
 - C. They wanted to become heroes.
 - D. They wanted to deliver toxin.
 4. Which is the **best** conclusion for the report as a whole?
 - A. Heroic deeds often involve danger.
 - B. Wop and Vic were both experienced flyers.
 - C. Cold-weather flying is difficult.
 - D. Engines can be hard to start in the cold.
 5. Which title suggests the main idea of this report **best**?
 - A. A Hero's Welcome
 - B. Cold-Weather Flying
 - C. Pioneer Aviation
 - D. Mercy Flight

Grade 6 Science Standards

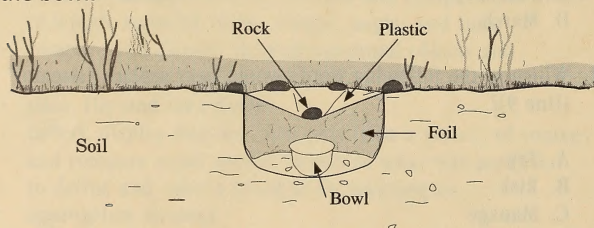
Students are expected to be able to:

- construct simple electrical and mechanical systems and show how these systems operate
- describe the properties of common liquids and solids, and use this knowledge to identify materials
- describe and interpret actions involving transmission of sound, light, and electricity
- describe and classify common earth materials
- predict the effect of changes in an environment
- observe and interpret weather conditions and their effects
- describe the living and non-living components of a pond ecosystem and the interactions among them
- know that a living thing has a structure, life cycle and life habitat

Grade 6 Science Sample Questions

Use the following information to answer question 1.

In order to practise desert survival skills, Amil made a solar water still. He dug a small hole in the ground and lined part of it with foil, placed a bowl in the bottom of the hole, covered the hole with plastic, and placed a rock on top of the plastic. The following day, he found water in the bowl.

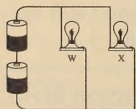


1. Where did the water droplets **most likely** form?

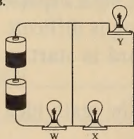
- A. In the bowl
- B. In the soil
- C. On top of the foil
- D. On the underside of the plastic

2. Andrew made some drawings of circuits used for display boards. If bulb W burns out, in which circuit will **at least** one bulb continue to glow?

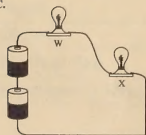
A.



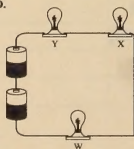
B.



C.

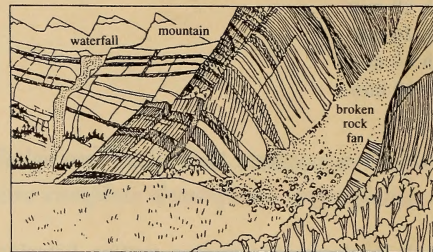


D.



Use the following drawing to answer question 3.

Mountain Landscape



3. Which of the following changes would **most likely** appear after five hundred years?

- A. The waterfall would be lower.
- B. The mountain would be more pointed.
- C. The broken rock fan would be smaller.
- D. Trees would cover less of the mountain.

Use the following information to answer question 4.

Andrew looked at a chart showing the boiling and freezing temperatures of different liquids.

Liquid	Boiling Point (becomes vapor)	Freezing Point (becomes solid)
Mercury	356°C	-38°C
Water	100°C	0°C
Alcohol	79°C	-112°C
Bromine	59°C	-7°C

4. If Andrew plans to measure temperatures below -40°C, which thermometer liquid would be **best** to use?

- A. Mercury
- B. Water
- C. Alcohol
- D. Bromine

5. Benita studied a display of bean plants showing different growing behaviours. Which behaviour is caused by a response to light?

- A. Roots moving toward water
- B. Leaves grow toward the sun
- C. Stems grow straight
- D. Stems wrap around objects

Grade 6 Social Studies Standards

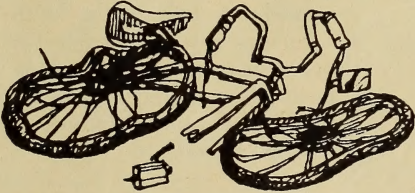
Students are expected to be able to:

- locate, organize, interpret and analyze information related to meeting human needs
- describe how meeting human needs have varied over time and from place to place
- use, interpret and compare maps of different scales and themes to locate places and identify physical and political features
- explain how countries are interdependent and how lifestyles are influenced by other nations
- identify the responsibilities and rights of individual citizens in Canada and the role of government
- show respect for others by using parliamentary procedures and accepting and abiding by the decision of the group

Grade 6 Social Studies
Sample Questions

1. The **main** role of the opposition in the government is to:
- A. research bills for the government
 - B. protect the rights of provinces
 - C. present other points of view
 - D. support the party-in-power

Use the table below to answer question 2.

HOW BICYCLE ACCIDENTS OCCURRED		
		
Category	% of Patients	
Lost control of bicycle	44	
Cyclist hit by moving car	17	
Child hit by cyclist	10	
Hazards on the road	7	
Passenger on bicycle	5	
Two cyclists collided	5	
Foot caught in spokes	4	
Fell off motionless bicycle	4	
Bicycle broke while riding	4	
Total	100	

2. Which of the following questions could be answered by using the information from the table?
- A. Why do so few cyclists ride safely?
 - B. Where do most bicycle accidents occur?
 - C. What causes the greatest number of bicycle accidents?
 - D. How many people die each year because of bicycling injuries?

3. Which statement shows that tradition affects the way people meet their need for food?
- A. Some people do not eat meat because of their religious beliefs.
 - B. Some people eat fruit often because it contains vitamins.
 - C. People make bread from many different kinds of flour.
 - D. People do not grow rice in dry climates.

Use the map below to answer question 4.



4. What information on the map supports the claim that the temperature in Palawan varies little between January and July?
- A. Palawan is a large island.
 - B. Palawan is near the equator.
 - C. Palawan has mountain ridges.
 - D. Palawan has a monsoon season.

Mathematics Answers	Language Arts Answers
1. B	1. B
2. D	2. A
3. B	3. D
4. B	4. A
	5. D
Science Answers	Social Studies Answers
1. D	1. C
2. A	2. C
3. A	3. A
4. C	4. B
5. B	

What use is made of the results?

After each student's work is marked, Alberta Education analyzes the results and prepares school, district and provincial reports. These reports show how well students did in relation to provincial standards. School staff, in consultation with their school councils, look at the school report to see where their students did well and where learning could be improved. The principal, teachers, parents and the community use these results and other local information to improve learning opportunities for their students.

Similarly, the school board and the superintendent look at the district report to see how district-wide programs can be improved for students.

Alberta Education looks at the provincial report for ways to improve provincial curricula, programs and policies. In this way, everyone works together to help all students learn to their potential.

Can I find out how my child did on the achievement tests?

Yes. We prepare a chart or profile showing your child's performance in relation to provincial standards on each test. We will

send the profile to the school that your child will be attending in September. If we do not know which school, we will send the profile to the school where your child wrote the achievement tests.

Where can I get more information about the Achievement Testing Program?

Bulletins describing the coming year's achievement tests are sent to schools in the fall. These bulletins show the types of questions students will be asked and may be used to prepare students for the provincial tests. A general information bulletin on the administration of the program is sent to schools too. You can request copies of these bulletins from the school or from Alberta Education.

More questions?

If you have additional questions or comments about achievement testing, please speak with your child's teacher or school principal, or contact:

Achievement Testing Team
Student Evaluation Branch
Alberta Education
(403) 427-0010

To be connected toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000.



DID YOU DO
THIS WHEN YOU
WENT TO SCHOOL?